Educationally backward blocks in U.P. and Chhattisgarh

2792. SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the number of the educationally backward blocks identified in Uttar Pradesh and Chhattisgarh;

(b) the number of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas opened in these States; and

(c) the criteria adopted by these States to open these Vidyalayas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) to (c) Out of 746 educationally backward blocks (EBBs)in U.P. and 99 EBBs in Chhattisgarh, 25 Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas have been opened in U.P. and 51 in Chhattisgarh. The States have opened these schools in eligible blocks under the scheme.

Literacy in rural areas

†2793. SHRI R. KAMARAJ: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that although Government had initiated various steps to improve the literacy rate in rural areas, the level of literacy in rural area has been far below as compared to the uban areas;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken further by Government to improve the literacy in the rural areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) As per Census 2001, the difference in the Urban-Rural literacy rate has declined from 28 percentage points in 1991 (Urban-73.08% & Rural-44.69%) to 21 percentage points in 2001 (Urban-79.9% & Rural-58.7%).

(b) The reasons for low literacy rate in rural areas include growth in population, poverty, gender discrimination, lack of infrastructure, and lack of awareness about relevance of education.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.